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Lt. Governor Announces Creation of Indiana Office of Tourism Development

Today Lt. Governor Becky Skillman, who oversees the state's tourism efforts, announced the creation of the new Indiana Office of Tourism Development (IOTD). Monday, Governor Mitch Daniels signed SEA 335 into law creating this new stand-alone agency at no additional cost to taxpayers.

"With this *new* office, we will see a *new* day for our state's dedication to growing and developing Indiana's important tourism sector," said Lt. Governor Skillman. "Having a stand-alone agency will raise the profile and highlight the importance of tourism to Indiana's overall economy."

The tourism industry brings in nearly \$7 billion annually to Indiana. Around 94-thousand Hoosiers are employed by tourism-related businesses. It is also an important economic development tool.

"Tourism plays a critical role in marketing our quality of life to companies looking to locate here *and* in recruiting new employees to existing Hoosier businesses," remarked Lt. Governor Skillman. "As we market Indiana as a wonderful place to visit and to live, we attract new opportunity—allowing us to create jobs. We also attract new talent—bringing additional strengths and skills to our workforce."

Tourism Director Amy Vaughan and IOTD staff, joined Governor Daniels and Lt. Governor Skillman, as well as tourism and hospitality professionals from across the state at the signing of this bill. Senator Vi Simpson (D-Bloomington) and Senator Robert Meeks (R-LaGrange) sponsored this legislation. Previously, the Office of Tourism was housed in the Indiana Department of Commerce.

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